MASSACHUSETTS ALL-PAYER CLAIMS DATABASE (APCD)

APCD Data – Frequently Asked Questions
[November 2012]

1. How often are files submitted to the APCD? (Alternatively: How up-to-date is the data in the APCD?)

    Medical, Pharmacy, Dental, Member Eligibility, and Provider file data are submitted monthly to the APCD. Product files are only submitted quarterly.

2. What is the format for APCD files?

    Files submitted are variable field length asterisk delimited files. An asterisk cannot be used within a field in lieu of another character. Example: if the file includes "Smith*Jones" in the Last Name, the system will read an incorrect number of fields and drop the file.

3. Are denied claims captured in the APCD?

    No. Wholly denied claims are not reported at this time. However, if a single procedure is denied within a paid claim, then that denied claim will be reported.

4. Are claims that are paid under a "global payment" or "capitated payment" (thus zero paid) reported in the APCD?

    Yes. Any medical claim that is considered "paid" by the carrier will appear in the appropriate claims file. "Paid amount" is reported as 0 and the corresponding Allowed, Contractual, and Deductible Amounts are calculated accordingly.

5. Are Allowed Charges captured in the APCD? If not, can they be derived?

    No. Allowed amounts need to be derived.   Note that Total Charges – Insurance Paid – [C+C+D]* – Insurance Not Covered = Contractual) where [C+C+D] = Copay + Coinsurance + Deductible.

    This allows the researcher to calculate the generally accepted definition of Allowed Amount by adding (Insurance Paid + [C+C+D] + Contractual).

    Additionally the Insurance Not Covered Lines in APCD are defined by Claim Status = 04 or 22 in MC038/PC025/DC031

6. How is APCD data stored?

    APCD data is hosted on servers located at the Center for Health Information and Analysis' offices at 2 Boylston St. in downtown Boston. The database is an SQL server and CHIA

utilizes all built-in security features to restrict and monitor access, as well as encryption. It is protected by additional multiple layers of security and is monitored in real-time.

7. Is APCD data encrypted/masked?

All APCD data is encrypted upon submission. Some APCD data elements are masked.   This means that the contents of the data element have been encrypted. However, the same encryption is used throughout the six (6) APCD files so that records can be linked.

8. Can APCD files be linked to one another?

Yes APCD files can be linked. Please see page 170 of our Data Release Documentation Guide to see a chart explaining cross-file relationships in the APCD.

9. How does the APCD deal with claims versioning?

An explanation of claims versioning in the APCD can be found starting on page 171 of the APCD Health Care Claims Data Release Documentation Guide.

10. If I have questions about APCD data, who should I contact?

Questions concerning APCD data should be sent to dhcfp.apcd@state.ma.us